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The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the
**European Charter for Researchers and the
Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of
Researchers**

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Introduction

Charter & Code (C&C)

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment has been adopted by the European Commission in the form of recommendation and is regarded as the main policy document on the topic of the management of Human Resources in Science and Research.

The European Charter for Researchers is a set of general principles and requirements which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers. The aim of the Charter is to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers or funders is conducive to successful performance in generating transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge and technological development, and to the career development of researchers. The Charter also recognizes the value of all forms of mobility as a means for enhancing the professional development of researchers.

The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers consists of a set of general principles and requirements that should be followed by employers and/or funders when appointing or recruiting researchers. These principles and requirements should ensure observance of values such as transparency of the recruitment process and equal treatment of all applicants, in particular with regard to the development of an attractive, open and sustainable European labour market for researchers, and are complementary to those outlined in the European Charter for Researchers

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Incorporating the Charter & Code

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) incorporating the Charter & Code is a five step "implementation process" which was formulated by the Commission in an effort to assist those research institutions that would like to incorporate the C&C in their human resources strategy. These five steps are:



Internal Analysis

The Charter & Code undersigning Research Institution (R.I.) makes an internal analysis, according for instance to a standard template 'grouping' all the 40 C&C principles in 4 areas (Ethical and professional aspects", "Recruitment", "Working conditions & social security", and "Training")

Publication of HR Strategy

The institution publishes on its website and on the European EURAXESS Rights web-page its "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, incorporating the Charter & Code principles. The publication is expected to summarise the main results of the internal analysis and to present any corrective actions the institution intends to carry out in order to fully integrate the C&C principles.

Acknowledgement of the European Commission

Provided that the above steps are formally respected, the European Commission "acknowledges" that the undersigning institution has adopted a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the Charter & Code".

Implementation of the HR Strategy and self-assessment

The research institution implements its HR strategy and conducts a self-assessment within the context of its existing internal Quality Assurance mechanisms, with regular periodicity, and in any case at least every 2nd year. Based on the self-assessment, the HR Strategy for Researchers is updated as necessary and published on the institution's website and the European EURAXESS Rights Webpage.

External Evaluation

Every 4 years, the institution drafts a short (max 4 pages) report, showing the progress made towards the objectives of its HR Strategy for Researchers. The report is evaluated either by a panel of external reviewers or through national QA mechanisms, such as National Evaluation Agencies, peer reviews, etc. If the evaluation is positive, the EC's acknowledgment is confirmed. If there are reservations from the evaluators regarding actual progress, recommendations for improvements within a reasonable timeframe are given to the RI. If, at the successive evaluation round, it emerges that no adequate actions to implement the recommendations are undertaken, the acknowledgment by the EC is withdrawn.

The Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH) and the C&C

CERTH is one of the first Greek research institutions that were involved in the C&C initiative. The Board of Directors of CERTH in its meeting on 31.08.2008 welcomed the initiative of the European Commission and undersigned the 40 principles of the C&C.

Afterwards, CERTH was invited in the "Charter and Code promoters" group which ran between October 2008 and April 2009. Its objective was to raise awareness of the C&C at institutional and national level. This group was succeeded by the "Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group" which advanced EC's implementation strategy from improving awareness to sharing strategies, practice and approaches. This latest group consisted of 44 research institutions (CERTH was among them) from 17 European countries.

In accordance with the guidelines of the EC, CERTH developed a questionnaire in order to assess its rules and practices vis-à-vis the Charter & Code principles. The findings of the survey were later discussed with CERTH's employers' association and with CERTH's President and Chairman of the Board of Directors. Both proposed corrective actions which are used as the basis of the updated Human Resource Strategy respecting the C&C principles.

Internal Analysis¹

CERTH, taking into account the experience gained from the “Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group”, decided to follow the successful examples of other European research institutions which assessed their HR rules and principles through a survey.

Background data of the survey

The survey was conducted from 1/11/2009 to 15/12/2009 with the use of questionnaire which was disseminated to all CERTH's institutes. Researchers of all ranks and types were asked to participate in the survey along with selected administrative staff related to human resources. The aim of the survey was to gather the opinion of CERTH's researchers regarding the Centre's human resources practices and to find out any deviations from the C&C principles.

The questionnaire was filled in by 97 employees who belong in any of the research personnel categories as mentioned in the presidential decree for CERTH's foundation. In detail, the questionnaire was filled in by:

Personnel Category	Total CERTH's personnel/category	Total answers/category	Percentage
Directors	6	1	16,67%
Researchers (Grade A')	7	3	42,86%
Researchers (Grade B')	8	5	62,50%
Researchers (Grade C')	8	7	87,50%
Researchers (Grade D')	8	4	50,00%
Other main Researchers	46	0	0,00%
Research Associate A'	0	0	-
Research Associate B'	3	2	66,67%
Research Associate C'	3	2	66,67%
Research Associate D'	0	0	-
Technical Associate	244	54	22,13%
Fellows	35	8	22,86%
Administrative personnel	57	2	3,51%
No Answer	-	9	-
TOTAL ²	425	97	22,82%

The structure of the questionnaire was simple and allowed an ease and quick completion by the responders. It examined all 40 principles of the C&C which were grouped in 4 main categories:

- i. Ethical and professional aspects
- ii. Recruitment
- iii. Working conditions and social security
- iv. Training

¹ The methodology of the Internal Analysis was based on the methodology applied by the University of Camerino amended properly taking into consideration CERTH's specific internal procedures and working environment.

² Not included: University professors of all ranks (21), assisting personnel (10) and 3 undergraduate fellows.

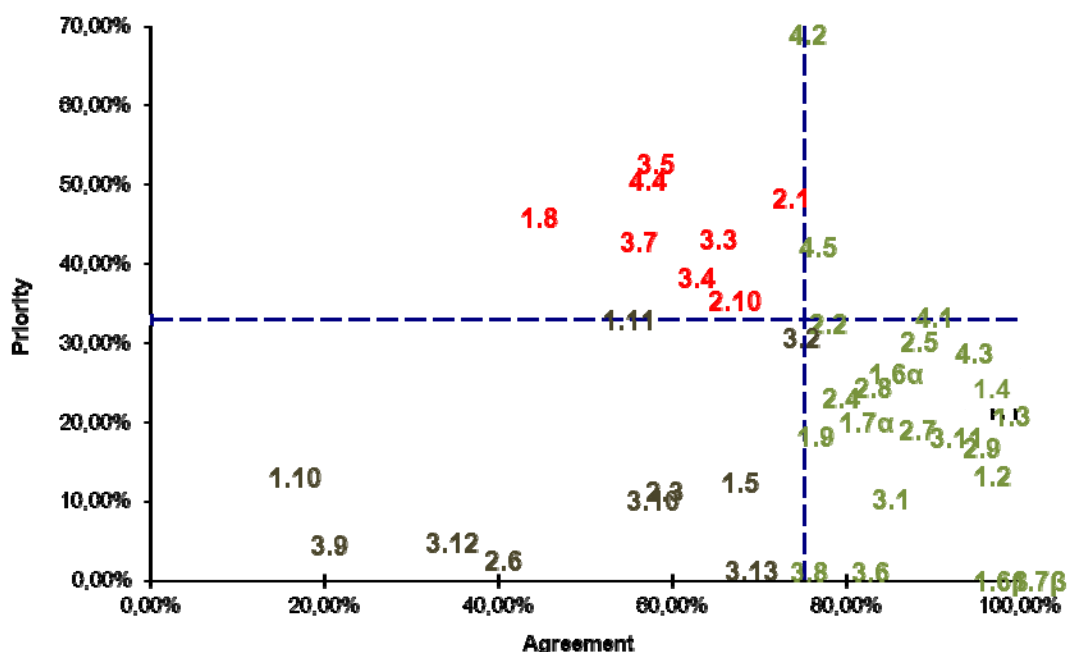
Each C&C principle was represented by at least one question. Responders were asked to answer each question with YES/NO depending on their belief that the statement is in accordance with CERTH's HR policy. In addition, respondents had the possibility to select three statements from each category indicating them as the most important ones.

Findings of the survey and corrective actions

The findings of the survey were interpreted with the following two assumptions:

- In cases where 75% or more of the responders agree that the statement is already part of CERTH's HR policy then it is considered that no actions are necessary since CERTH's internal regulation is in conformity with the respective HR principle
- The statements that require significant attention are those which gather less than 75% agreement between the responders and were rated among the three most important statements of each category.

An overview of the responses in terms of agreement and priority is depicted in the graph below:



Graph 1. Relationship between agreement and priority of each statement

Major findings and proposed corrective actions are mentioned below:

Category 1: Ethical and professional aspects

Question 1.6a: Do CERTH's researchers adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management?

(Agreement: 85,71%, Priority: 26,19%)

Note: No corrective actions are needed as the proportion of agreement exceeds 75%

Question 1.8: Are research results disseminated, exploited or commercialized?
(Agreement: 44,71%, Priority: 45,88%)

Corrective actions: The Liaison Office of CERTH which operates since CERTH's foundation is responsible for:

- ✓ the dissemination of CERTH's technological achievements and exploitation of its research
- ✓ the support of CERTH's research in patent and intellectual property rights issues

To this end, CERTH intends to strengthen and support the efforts of the Liaison Office towards the accomplishment of the abovementioned objectives.

Furthermore, the Board of Directors of CERTH will discuss a detailed recommendation that has already been drafted regarding the establishment of spin-offs in order to create a favorable environment for the commercial exploitation of research results.

Question 1.11: Does CERTH implement evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing the professional performance of all researchers?
(Agreement: 54,88%, Priority: 32,93%)

Corrective actions: The Central Administration of CERTH has submitted to the Board of Directors a recommendation which includes comprehensive evaluation criteria for researchers of all grades.

In addition, the Board of Directors will establish a working group consisted of representatives of all CERTH's institutions. The aim of the working group will be to further elaborate and finalize the evaluation criteria.

Statements which CERTH's policies are in conformity with:

- Question 1.1: Research freedom (Agreement 97,83%)
- Question 1.2: Ethical principles (Agreement 96,67%)
- Question 1.3: Professional responsibility (Agreement 98,90%)
- Question 1.4: Professional attitude (Agreement 96,70%)
- Question 1.6b: Open methods of collection and analysis to internal and external scrutiny (Agreement 97,67%)
- Question 1.7a: Safe working practices (Agreement 82,22%)
- Question 1.7b: Data protection and confidentiality protection requirements (Agreement 96,47%)
- Question 1.9: Public engagement (Agreement 76,34%)
- Question 1.10: Non-discrimination (Agreement 83,52%)

Category 2: Recruitment

Question 2.1: Does CERTH ensure that the entry and admission standards for researchers, especially at the beginning of their careers, are clearly specified?
(Agreement: 73,56%, Priority: 48,28%)

Note: No corrective actions are foreseen for the near future

Question 2.2: Has CERTH established open and transparent recruitment procedures?
(Agreement: 77,91%, Priority: 32,56%)

Note: No corrective actions are needed as the proportion of agreement exceeds 75%

Question 2.3: Is the composition of CERTH's selection committees in conformity with the C&C principles?
(Agreement: 59,09%, Priority: 11,36%)

Corrective actions: The selection of researchers (Grade A, B, C and D) is regulated by national legislation and no internal decisions from CERTH's administration can override national legislation.

However, regarding the selection committees for the rest research personnel categories, CERTH's administration will communicate with its research institutes in order to ensure that the C&C principles will be respected and applied throughout the selection process.

Question 2.10: Does CERTH provide additional professional development opportunities for the postdoctoral researchers?
(Agreement: 67,07%, Priority: 35,37%)

Note: The professional development of postdoctoral researchers is affected by extraneous factors such as CERTH's low regular national financing, which prevents CERTH from increasing the number of researchers in higher levels of hierarchy, and the low R&D activity in the Greek industrial sector.

Statements which CERTH's policies are in conformity with:

- Question 2.5: Judging merit (Agreement 88,37%)
- Question 2.7: Recognition of mobility experience (Agreement 88,10%)
- Question 2.8: Recognition of qualification (Agreement 98,90%)

Category 3: Working conditions and social security

Question 3.3: Are you satisfied, in general terms, with the working conditions?
(Agreement: 65,26%, Priority 43,16%)

Note: CERTH's Internal Regulation includes specific rules in terms of flexibility in the working environment (sabbatical leaves, parental leaves, flexible working hours etc.) respecting the C&C principles. Nevertheless, the approval of the abovementioned leaves lies on the scientific responsible of each research team taking under consideration the needs of the unit.

Question 3.5: Does CERTH ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or adequate salaries?
(Agreement: 58,06%, Priority: 52,69%)

Note: Funding of research is determined by the Governmental decisions and surpasses CERTH's decisions and strategy.
Regarding CERTH's personnel salary scale, the Board of Directors has adopted a specific scale of wages aiming at the equal treatment of the personnel and the transparent salary advancement. For the determination of the abovementioned scale, CERTH took into consideration collective agreements in public and private sector and CERTH's funding from national and other external sources (EC, Industry etc.).

Question 3.7: Does CERTH offer appropriate career development opportunities?
(Agreement: 43,96%, Priority: 42,86%)

Note: As mentioned in question 2.10, CERTH has limited power in offering career development opportunities due to external factors as the low national funding and the legal framework which governs recruitments.
However, young scientists have through CERTH's research projects the opportunity to establish bonds and relationships with prestigious universities, research centres and industries worldwide. Those relationships may be useful for the further career development of researchers.

Question 3.4: Does CERTH ensure, as far as possible, stability and permanence of employment?
(Agreement: 62,79%, Priority: 38,37%)

Note: CERTH is mainly funded through European competitive projects. To this end, as long as CERTH remains highly competitive in terms of research activity and external funding, stability of employment is ensured.

Statements which CERTH's policies are in conformity with:

- Question 3.1: Recognition of professional experience (Agreement 85,06%)
- Question 3.2 Research environment (Agreement 74,73%)
- Question 3.6: Gender Balance (Agreement 82,76%)
- Question 3.8: Recognition of mobility experience (Agreement: 75,61%)
- Question 3.11: Co-authorship (Agreement 92,55%)

Category 4: Training

Question 4.4: Are research training and continuous development ensured in CERTH?
(Agreement: 42,86%, Priority: 50,55%)

Note: As mentioned before, researchers' stability and consequently their training is ensured as long as external funding is achieved since 75% of CERTH personnel expenses are covered by sources other than public funding

Statements which CERTH's policies are in conformity with:

- Question 4.1: Relation with supervisors (Agreement 92,31%)
- Question 4.2: Supervision and managerial duties (Agreement 75,56%)
- Question 4.3: Gender Balance (Agreement 82,76%)
- Question 4.5: Supervisions (Agreement 79,49%)